

Subject: My Op-Ed on Driver Licenses

From: "Gilbert Cedillo" <Gilbert.Cedillo@lacity.org>

Date: 08/18/2014 01:20 PM

To: "mistyli@aol.com" <mistyli@aol.com>



Op-Ed: Homeland Security should stand down on driver's licenses

I want to share with you my Op-Ed that was printed in today's Sacramento Bee. Please share with your network. Thank you.

-Gil Cedillo

Viewpoints: Homeland Security should stand down on driver's licenses By Gil Cedillo

Special to The Bee Published: Monday, Aug. 18, 2014 - 12:00 am

A hard-fought dream for immigrant families across California is on the verge of becoming reality.

In just a few months, undocumented residents will be able to apply for driver's licenses just like any other Californian. The result will be safer roads and increased integration of immigrants into our communities.

But as our state cruises towards implementing [Assembly Bill 60](#), one roadblock is standing in the way of progress: the federal government.

The Department of Homeland Security recently rejected the design for these licenses, which California legislators carefully crafted to meet the requirements of the controversial federal Real ID Act. That law, criticized across the political spectrum, requires that licenses for people who do not have certain documents look different from regular ones.

In the 16 years since I first introduced legislation to allow undocumented immigrants in California to become licensed, tested and insured drivers, the issue of what the license should look like has been one of the most deeply felt.

Some civil rights groups have objected to any distinguishing mark that would single out immigrants; others have argued just as strongly that we shouldn't let the perfect be the enemy of the good.

So I'm proud that Sacramento ultimately achieved what Washington, D.C., has utterly failed to do on immigration. Last year, the Legislature and the governor struck a reasonable compromise with Assemblyman Luis Alejo's AB 60 and did something positive for immigrant communities.

To meet the "Real ID" requirement and address concerns about discrimination, AB 60 proposed that the license feature a small, recognizable feature on the front, along with language on the back clarifying that the card is not for official federal purposes.

Since AB 60 passed, our state's people and institutions have been on track to make this historic new law succeed. Community groups are helping people master the rules of the road. The DMV has drafted thorough regulations to guide the application process, and many people have offered thoughtful feedback at public hearings.

So I was just as surprised and disappointed as my colleagues in the Legislature and Congress when DHS rejected this carefully considered design. Instead, the agency insisted on a larger and more prominent mark on the front.

The clock is ticking on finalizing the design, which must be ready very soon so the licenses can be prepared and printed in time for the Jan. 1 deadline. I urge President Barack Obama to reconsider the counterproductive DHS stance.

The president is increasingly known in immigrant communities as the "deporter-in-chief," with 2 million deportations under his watch and counting.

His promises on immigration reform have gone unfulfilled, while the suffering of immigrant families has grown immeasurably under his administration. Trust in him is at a breaking point among families who have seen mothers, daughters, fathers and sons torn away and cruelly deported.

Dropping the unreasonable DHS interference with California's licenses would be a simple, immediate step the president could take to show he cares about immigrant communities. Obama shouldn't allow DHS to trash a reasonable compromise that complies with federal law to placate anti-immigrant forces who really represent only a vocal minority in our increasingly diverse nation.

Ultimately, this is about our values as a state and a nation. Documented and undocumented immigrants are a vital part of the fabric of our communities, but the federal government has failed to create an immigration process that brings people out of the shadows.

Meanwhile, states like California are doing what we can to uphold our nation's founding principle that all people are created equal. If Washington can't lead, it should at least get out of the way.

Gil Cedillo, a former state senator and assemblyman, is a member of the Los Angeles City Council.

<http://www.sacbee.com/2014/08/18/6632657/viewpoints-homeland-security-should.html>

###

This message was sent to mistyli@aol.com by:

Los Angeles Councilmember Gil Cedillo, District 1
200 N. Spring St., Room 470
Los Angeles, CA 90012
(213) 473-7001



Unsubscribe:

If you would like to be removed from this list, please [click here](#).